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**PRESS RELEASE**

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**U.S. Ambassador Dedicates Plaque for the Regent Road Baptist Church**

FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE – United States Ambassador to Sierra Leone Michael Owen dedicated a plaque on May 15 for the Regent Road Baptist Church in Freetown, the oldest Baptist church on the African continent.

“This plaque is yet another manifestation of the unique historic linkages that enrich the strong friendship between our two countries. I hope that tourists and Sierra Leoneans alike will stop by to see this very special commemorative plaque,” Ambassador Owen said

The church was founded in 1792 following a Thanksgiving Service held by the freed slaves at the Cotton tree in Freetown after traveling for three months. These founding members were made up of a diverse group, including Methodists, members of the Countess of Huntingdon Connection, and Baptists.

The Baptists in the group were accompanied by their pastor, Reverend David George, a Virginia-born Baptist preacher and himself a freed slave. He soon assembled the worshippers into a Baptist Church, the first to be established on the Continent of Africa.

The church now enjoys a special link to the Albert Street Baptist Church in Alexandria, VA, which is just 200 years old.

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